

PASSPORT To Health

Keeping Providers Informed

Volume 2, Issue 2, Summer 2005

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Key Contacts

PASSPORT To Health Provider Relations

For provider enrollment or disenrollment, change of ownership or address, increasing/decreasing client caseload, and claims questions:

(800) 624-3958 In-State
(406) 442-1837
(406) 442-4402 Fax

Mail documentation to:
Provider Relations
PO Box 4936
Helena, MT 59604

PASSPORT To Health Client Services

For enrolling or disenrolling clients, questions about your monthly caseload report, or client services:

(800) 362-8312
(406) 442-2328 Fax

Mail documentation to:
PASSPORT Program
PO Box 254
Helena, MT 59624

Visit our website:
www.mtmedicaid.org

For newsletter mailing list changes,
contact aburton@mt.gov

PASSPORT Summits Result in Good Provider Feedback

The Medicaid Managed Care Bureau has begun the challenging task of sifting through the many comments and suggestions received from attendees at the PASSPORT Summits held this spring.

Providers and other stakeholders were asked to give their ideas regarding how PASSPORT could function most effectively in the future for both providers and clients.

"We heard a lot of innovative and thoughtful suggestions from people who came to the Summits," said PASSPORT To Health Program Officer Niki Scofield. "Provider input is key to the program's success, and I want to thank those who took the time to share their insights with us."



Debbie Gregory of the Belgrade Clinic, Dr. Nancy Maynard of the Great Falls Clinic, and Dr. Nancie Nordwick of Nordwick Pediatrics in Helena brainstorm ideas at the Helena PASSPORT Summit.

The Summits were held in Helena, Havre, Billings, Kalispell, and Missoula. While each meeting was unique in its own way, there were some common themes about the PASSPORT program that arose at each of them. A sampling of those common themes include:

What's good:

- PASSPORT provides clients with a medical home and continuity of care.
- PASSPORT children have higher Well Child screening rates.
- The list of PASSPORT clients provided by DPHHS to providers each month is helpful.

Other positive comments that were expressed were kudos for the Nurse First and Team Care programs.

What could work better:

- Some clients utilize the ER inappropriately.
- Some clients don't show up for their appointments.

- Some clients show a lack of knowledge about preventive healthcare.
- Getting referrals from PASSPORT providers is sometimes difficult.

While not directly related to the PASSPORT To Health program, attendees also frequently recommended raising Medicaid reimbursement rates and improving clients' access to dental care.

Suggestions for the future:

A variety of ideas were discussed, from modest changes to those that would be more comprehensive. A sampling of those that were mentioned most include:

- Expand the Nurse First and Team Care programs.
- Integrate medical homes to include hospitals, urgent care centers, and specialists.
- Move toward more prior authorizations for services and away from referrals.
- Make clients more responsible.
- Send clients an explanation of benefits.
- Encourage more preventive healthcare by waiving the co-pay requirement for those visits.
- Provide more client education.

To read the notes from each Summit, visit Montana Medicaid's website at www.mtmedicaid.org. Updates on proposed changes to PASSPORT will be made available on the website as they become available. We will also send updates via e-mail; if you would like to be added to our electronic distribution list, please contact Niki at niscofield@mt.gov or (406) 444-4148.

You may also watch for updates in this provider newsletter and the *Claim Jumper*.

PASSPORT To Health Client Survey Highlights

In an effort to measure the success of the PASSPORT To Health program, the Montana Medicaid Managed Care Bureau sends out surveys annually to a random selection of PASSPORT clients. These surveys offer some valuable insight into how your patients feel about you, the quality of the care they receive, access to that care, and their understanding of the PASSPORT program.

Our most recent survey was conducted in November 2004. We sent surveys to 2,000 child and adult PASSPORT clients; 780 responses were received. Of them, 209 were from clients who identified themselves as Native Americans.

Survey highlights include:

- Forty-three percent of adult and 52% of child survey respondents rated their provider as “the best personal provider possible.”
- Seventy-six percent of adult and 89% of child survey respondents rated their satisfaction with the PASSPORT program as “high.” Forty-three percent of adult and 51% of child respondents said they were “completely satisfied.”
- Over 85% of respondents chose their PASSPORT provider and 77% had no problem choosing a provider with whom they are pleased.
- Sixty to 70% of respondents have received routine or regular care during the preceding six months.

- Seventy-one percent of adult and 57% of child survey respondents reported that their providers always explained things in a way they or their child could understand.
- Eighty-two percent of adult respondents and 92% of child survey respondents indicated that they “usually” or “always” get the help they need from their PCP’s office. Similarly, 88% of adult and 93% of child survey respondents reported the staff at their provider’s office was “usually” or “always” as helpful as the respondents thought the staff should be.

Issues of client concern were raised during the survey process as well, including:

- Lack of understanding regarding PASSPORT policy on family planning.
- Lack of understanding regarding PASSPORT policy on changing providers.
- Lack of understanding of the inappropriateness of taking a child to the emergency room for routine care. Over 44% of respondents believed this was acceptable. This response was slightly higher in Native American survey respondents at 52%.

One of the reasons PASSPORT conducts annual surveys is to learn about what our clients perceive as problems with the program. Good things are already happening

in terms of addressing some of these issues: For example, we are redesigning our client education materials to make them easier to read and understand. In addition, the recent implementation of the Nurse First Advice Line should help curb inappropriate ER visits over time. PASSPORT clients are encouraged to call the Nurse First Advice Line before seeking medical treatment. Callers receive guidance from registered nurses in receiving “the right care at the right time at the right place.” Call rates to the advice line are very promising and continue to increase.

We’re also doing more to enlist your help in outreaching to our clients. Our staff visited a number of providers this spring to provide Nurse First education. During those visits, we delivered Nurse First wallet cards and asked for your assistance in giving them directly to clients who visit the ER inappropriately, with the goal of preventing more such visits in the future.

Watch for updates in this provider newsletter, the *Claim Jumper*, or our website to read about what we’re doing to help alleviate other issues raised during the survey.

Overall, the survey results were very positive. And, as you can see, your patients think **you’re doing a great job – and so do we!** We appreciate your commitment and dedication to serving the Medicaid population of Montana. If you would like to read the complete adult and child client survey results and analysis, visit our website at www.mtmedicaid.org and click on the “PASSPORT” or “Medicaid News” buttons.

Our Clients Say:

During a busy day, it may be hard to remember all the good you are doing when you serve PASSPORT To Health clients. Likewise, our clients may not always express their appreciation to you when they’re in your office. Here are some comments from our clients about their PCPs:

“I really like **Physician’s Assistant Frank Pawlak at Granite County Medical Center in Philipsburg**. He is very nice and always returns my phone calls. I feel as though I get very good care from him.”

“I remember the first time I went to see **Dr. Cooper in Sidney** 28 years ago. I was told that I was Dr. Cooper’s very first patient there. During those years, Donald Cooper saw me through a major accident that disabled me, as well as two strokes later on. Dr. Cooper treated me as if I were a friend, and attended to me in most caring manner ever. Because of this, I never wanted to see anyone else, and stayed with Dr. Cooper for 28 years. When Dr. Cooper announced his retirement, he made sure to contact me, and gave me a big hug as he said his good-byes. I will never have another doctor with the tremendous bedside manner that Dr. Cooper has, and will deeply miss him.”

“**Physician’s Assistant Al O’Brien at Community Health Center in Butte** is great! He is a sweetheart and always responds immediately to my family’s health needs.”

“We are so thankful for Montana Medicaid and our wonderful doctor and nurse. We have a beautiful baby girl and I know she is in good hands. Thank you.”

In the Spotlight:

Dr. Steven Helgerson DPHHS Chief Medical Officer

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services has announced the hiring of Dr. Steven Helgerson as the new chief medical officer. He began the job August 1, replacing Dr. Mike Spence, who retired at the end of last year.

Dr. Helgerson earned his medical degree and master's degree in public health from the University of Washington. He has worked for the U.S. Public Health Service, Indian Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Care Financing Administration, and state and local public health agencies. His experience and expertise in public health programming and epidemiology spans a wide range of issues, from infectious disease control to environmental health to chronic disease prevention.



Dr. Helgerson has held faculty appointments at the University of Washington, University of North Dakota, Yale University, and Oregon Health Sciences University. He has also published extensively in public health and medical literature.

Some of Dr. Helgerson's duties at DPHHS will include:

- Provide medical direction and oversight of department activities and programs. This includes consultation to Montana Medicaid to resolve policy issues such as coverage, medical necessity, and quality assurance.
- Providing leadership to statewide public health program planning and administration, including health assessment and epidemiology; policy development; healthcare service delivery; and services provided to individuals and communities by private and public providers.
- Evaluate the causes of diseases and provide medical support and research related to interventions necessary to prevent disease, mitigate outbreaks, and promote healthy behavior.

"I'm excited to join DPHHS and look forward to working with providers across the state, particularly those who see our Medicaid clients. Your dedication helps many of Montana's most vulnerable citizens lead healthier lives, which in turns leads to healthier, safer communities."

Dr. Helgerson can be reached at (406) 444-0286 or shelgerson@mt.gov.

The Paperless Newsletter

During our recent PASSPORT Summits, we heard from some of you that e-mail is your preferred method of communication. With that in mind, we are considering distributing this newsletter by electronic means to providers who would like to receive it via their computer instead of a paper copy.

We want to know what you think: If you'd like to receive a quarterly e-mail notice with a link to a PDF newsletter file posted on our website, e-mail PASSPORT Communications Manager Anastasia Burton at aburton@mt.gov. If you would prefer to continue receiving a hard copy of the newsletter, no reply is necessary.



PASSPORT FAQs

How does PASSPORT outreach to clients?

Clients are initially educated by their local Office of Public Assistance. All clients with a phone receive three letters and at least three phone call attempts to outreach and educate before we assign them to a provider. We successfully contact 85% of those clients with a phone (71% of all new clients). Clients with phones also receive a call after we auto-assign them to a provider.

All clients receive three letters informing them they need to choose a PASSPORT provider.

The outreach calls and the materials mailed to clients are designed to help them understand their role in PASSPORT and the rules of the program. PASSPORT clients also receive a "Getting Started" PASSPORT brochure and handbook. In addition, all clients enrolled in Medicaid receive a comprehensive general Medicaid handbook.

PASSPORT clients also receive newsletters to keep them informed of PASSPORT policy and the importance of preventive care, nutrition, exercise, etc. Households with children also receive magnets with immunization schedules. In addition, those same families receive annual reminder letters prior to their child's birthday stressing the importance of Well Child checks.

PASSPORT clients also receive quarterly Nurse First mailers reminding them of the availability of the service. In addition, PASSPORT clients enrolled in the Nurse First Disease Management program get quarterly mailers offering health care tips tailored to their conditions.

Finally, the PASSPORT program utilizes annual surveys that shed light on clients' understanding of program policies. This data helps us tailor outreach materials to policy areas of which clients are either unsure or unaware.

PASSPORT to Implement Two New Screens

Montana Medicaid is excited to announce two new features that will benefit our PASSPORT To Health providers and their clients.

Expedited appointment screening (EAS) will help identify clients who are in need of ongoing care within the next 30 days.

The children with special health care needs (CSHCN) screener will help identify young clients who have chronic and/or complex physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions.

These screenings will be conducted during our client outreach calls. A series of questions, developed to determine ongoing healthcare needs, will be asked of all clients new to the PASSPORT program. Clients will supply this information on

a voluntary basis. Data gathered from these screenings of new clients will be sent to the client's PCP.

Information from the EAS was sent to providers beginning in August; the CSHCN screener data will be available starting in September. Providers will continue to receive the same provider enrollee lists, as well as a separate list with new clients and their EAS/CSHCN screener information. This will allow the provider to better manage his/her client's care.

The PASSPORT program expects these new tools will be beneficial to the provider in many ways, including:

- Easier identification of clients who need to be seen immediately to allow for continuity of care;

- Earlier identification of children who may have special health care needs;
- Promotes coordination of specialty and ancillary services;
- Provides an opportunity for PCPs to get to know the needs of the families quicker.

Montana Medicaid believes this tool will help the client establish a medical home more quickly, thereby receiving appropriate, medically necessary services at the right time.

For more information about either of these new features, contact PASSPORT Program Officer Niki Scoffield at (406) 444-4148 or niscoffield@mt.gov.

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